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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a larger study, conducted as part of a Christa McAuliffe Fellowship research project, "A Comparative Geography of Three Ecologically Similar Regions." The study compared the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland with the Murray River region of South Australia and the Rio de la Plata region of Uruguay. The project was designed to be usable by teachers and readable by students. The readings and questions after the readings are complete in themselves. Teachers are encouraged to draw upon other resources to add more depth to this unit. Using any two of the studies (Australia, Uruguay, or Maryland) permits teachers to use a technique called comparative geography which presents data and encourages students to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in the three regions. A question segment accompanies the readings. Some vocabulary words are in Spanish to help children become acquainted with a new language. (EH/Author)

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A Geography of Uruguay for Elementary Children

William Fitzhugh
November, 1995

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Fitzhugh, W. (1995, November) A geography of Uruguay for elementary children. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council for the Social Studies, Chicago.

This paper was presented at the conference. It is part of a larger study I conducted as part of my Christa McAuliffe Fellowship research. The title of the fellowship project was: "A Comparative Geography of Three Ecologically Similar Regions." The study compared the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland with the Murray River region of South Australia and the Rio de la Plata region of Uruguay. The project was designed to be usable by teachers and readable by students. The readings and questions after the readings are complete in themselves. Teachers are encouraged to draw upon other resources to add more depth to this unit. The National Geographic Society has published several articles on all three regions. The pictures in this publication are very useful for instruction.
Using any two of the studies (Australia, Uruguay, or Maryland) permits teachers to use a technique called comparative geography which presents data and encourages students to draw conclusions about similarities and differences in the three regions, There is a great deal of environmental informational presented in the study as well as interesting geography.

Uruguay

Uruguay is a beautiful country. Although it is smaller than many countries in South America, there is a great deal to learn about this fascinating country. There are many similarities between Uruguay and Maryland. Both Maryland and Uruguay are dominated by important water systems. The topography of both regions are similar. The climates of each region are similar. And in both regions people share similar environmental concerns.

Much of Uruguay will remind a visitor of Maryland's Eastern Shore. There are many rolling hills and grassy meadows. These rolling hills are called cuchillas (the Spanish word for knives.) The soil here is very fertile and suited to farming. There are mountains in western Maryland. But there is nothing like a real mountain in Uruguay. Uruguayans love the countryside.

Many people, some from different countries, visit the beaches along the southern coast of Uruguay. Tourists come here during the summer season which lasts from December to March. The sandy beaches will remind visitors of Maryland's Ocean City. The name of the region is Punta del Este. Like Ocean City, Punta del Este is on the Atlantic Ocean. It is an area of great natural beauty. Many environmentalists are interested in this area.

Since Uruguay is south of the equator the seasons are reversed. When Maryland is having summer, Uruguay is having winter. Both countries lie in a temperate climate zone. This means that the summers are hot and humid. The winters are cold and windy. It does not snow in Uruguay during the winter, but warm clothing is necessary. The pattern of rain fall is much the same as it is in Maryland. Uruguay generally gets about forty inches of rain throughout the year. There is no dry season. The strong winds that blow from the north are humid and hot. The winds that blow from the south are called the Pampero. These winds are cold and dry.

Water is an important natural resource. The three main rivers are the Rio de la Plata, the Uruguay River, and the Rio Negro. The Rio Negro flows into the Uruguay River. The Uruguay River joins the Parana River of Argentina to make the Rio de la Plata. The Uruguay River is much like the

Susquehanna River. The Rio de la Plata is like the Chesapeake Bay in many ways. Rivers are a source of drinking water. Rivers are important for communication. Large dams generate electricity need by city dwellers.

The Rio de la Plata is important to the people of Uruguay in many ways. It serves as an important part of the transportation system for the country. Just as Baltimore is an important port city on the Chesapeake Bay, Montevideo is an important port city on the Rio de la Plata.

A visitor would notice similarities of vegetation. Much of Uruguay is covered with gently rolling hills. These hills are covered with grasses. Grassland is good for grazing cattle and sheep. A visitor will enjoy seeing an Uruguayan cowboy, the gaucho, as he goes about his work. Livestock grazing is a of major importance to the economy of Uruguay. There are also small forests in northern Uruguay. And, of course, the beaches of Uruguay are popular vacation areas and are world famous.

At one time there were many different kinds of wildlife in Uruguay. Just as in Maryland, the way people use the land has reduced the number and variety of wildlife you can see. Some unusual animals that you can see in Uruguay are: jaguars, pumas, capybaras, foxes, deer, armadillos, rheas, and alligators. Two animals which are endangered and face extinction are the field deer and the rhea. You can see many of these animals at the Baltimore Zoo!

Many people who live in Uruguay are proud of their Indian ancestry. Hundreds of years ago, Portuguese and Spanish explorers came to the Rio de la Plata region. These early explorers found the Charrua Indians. There are no people in Uruguay who claim to be one hundred percent Charrua Indian today. The government has begun teaching school children more about the people who first lived in Uruguay. Most of the people who live in Uruguay have ancestors who come from Europe and Africa. Most of the people who live in Uruguay speak Spanish.
There are people who speak Italian and English as well.

Agricultural products are more important to Uruguay's economy than industrial products. There are no heavy industries in Uruguay. One kind of heavy industry is steel making. Steel manufacturing is an important industry you can see in Baltimore. There are factories in Montevideo which can meat and process and freeze meat, make dairy products, and

tan leather. Tourism is also an important industry.

The Chesapeake Bay is famous for seafood. Many people in Uruguay are involved in fishing for a living ,too. Fishing fleets and fish canneries are located near La Paloma in the Rocha region. Since cattle and sheep are the main agricultural products, products made from cattle and sheep are important industries in Uruguay. The main items produced for export are: wool. meat, and leather. Uruguay is the fourth largest exporter of wool in the world. Wool is used for carpeting, clothing, and lanolin. Most products made for export go to Argentine, Brazil, western Europe, the Near East, and the United States. Rice is an important cereal export. Petroleum and machinery are the main products which are imported Imported goods come from Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Western Europe, and the Near East.

Montevideo is an excellent example of a primate city. A primate city is one which is important for economic, religious, industrial, educational, and cultural reasons. Montevideo is the capital and most important city in Uruguay. Montevideo and its suburbs are almost the same size as Baltimore and its suburbs. The population of Uruguay is 3,141,533. The population of Montevideo is 1,246,500. Almost one half of the country's population lives in metropolitan Montevideo. Most of Uruguay's citizens live in cities of one size or another. Montevideo is the most important manufacturing city. It is the most important port. The laws for the country are made in Montevideo. The laws for the United State are made in Washington, D.C. The laws for the state of Maryland are made in Annapolis.

The people of Uruguay want to preserve their environment just as we in Maryland do. Montevideo has the same environmental concerns as other cities of similar size. One area of concern is sewage treatment. Montevideo is building a new sewage treatment facility. Currently, untreated sewage is sent into the middle of the Rio de la Plata. Seasonal high winds often blow sewage back to shore polluting the city's beautiful beaches.

Another area of concern is air quality. Although strong winds may remove air pollutants, air quality is still a problem. Air quality is also a concern for people who live in Baltimore. The number of automobiles in Montevideo increases each year. Catalytic converters are not required by

law. In Maryland, catalytic converters are require by law to reduce auto emissions. and automobiles are required by law to have their exhaust systems inspected every two years. Uruguay does not have these air pollution laws. Gasoline stations still sell leaded gasoline, too.

There are areas like national/state parks in Uruguay. One area of importance in our study is on the extreme southern coast near Punta del Este. This is a natural wetland area similar to Assateague National Seashore. It, too, is on the Atlantic Ocean. The wetlands of Rocha are of world wide importance. Many different kinds of birds live here all year round. This area also serves as a resting place for migratory birds.

The problems facing the Rocha region are in part cause by its popularity. Thousands of tourists enjoy visiting this area. Parts of these wetlands are owned by private individuals. Some citizens are concerned that the national government has not begun buying up this land for a permanent national seashore. One of the reasons more land is not in national parks is a lack of national money for this purpose. We are fortunate to have Assateague National Seashore near by.

The wetlands of Rocha are also threatened by water run-off from nearby farms. The water from farms in rich in fertilizer which causes pollution problems for the wetlands.

Another concern to environmentalists is the tourist industry. This region is a popular vacation area. More building is going on to provide hotel rooms for tourists who visit Punta del Este. There is more traffic as well as more water and air pollution. The national government is becoming more active in preserving these wetland regions.

Seals come to this area for breeding purposes. The government strongly regulates the number of seals which can be taken each year. The seals are sold for their hides. Sealskin coats are popular with some people.

QUESTIONS:

1. How are the terrain of Uruguay and the Chesapeake region similar?

_____

_____

2. How are the climates of the two regions similar?

3. How are the climates of the two regions different?

4. How is the Punta del Este similar to the Eastern Shore?

5. Describe a gaucho.

6. What are two threatened animals?

7. What is the difference between threatened and extinct?

8. What has happened to the native people of Uruguay?

9. What products are produced by Uruguayan industry?

10. What products from Uruguay could you use?

11. What are four environmental concerns people of Uruguay have?

12. Choose a problem. How would you solve this problem?

13. Describe the Rocha region. How is like Assateague?

14. How have the people in Uruguay adapted to their environment?

15. How have the people changed the environment as the result of technology?

16. How has the geography of the region affected the growth of cities?

17. How has land use changed from 100 years ago?

18. How has industrial development helped Uruguay become a member of the "world economy?"

SPANISH VOCABULARY: Here are some words you might enjoy knowing.
Spanish is the national language of Uruguay

como estas	muy bien
estoy muy bien	estoy asi asi
estoy mal	senor
senora	hola
adios	Como te llamos
Me llama...	uno
dos	tres
cuatro	cinco
seis	siete
ocho	neuve
diez	once
doce	trace
catorce	quince
diez y seis	diez y siete
diez y ocho	diez y neuve
viente	y
colores	blanco
gris	moreno
verde	rosado
amarillo	violetta
azul	rojo
negro	naranjo
ojos	boca
nariz	pelo
orejas	lunes
martes	mercales
jueves	sabado
viernes	domingo
gaucho	siesta
estancia	mombachas
mate	bombilla
yerba	boledores
puesteros	asado
facon	bolas
poncho	canon
el ligarto	mosca
rancho	vaquero

rodeo
vamos
lazo
barbacoa

calabozo
corral
patio

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Embassy of Uruguay, 1918 F. St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20006

Consulate General of Uruguay, 747 Third Ave., 21st. Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017

US Embassy, Calle Lauro Muller 1776, Montevideo, Uruguay

Uruguay Desk Officer, US Dept. of Commerce, Room 3021, Washington, D.C. 20230

Alianza Cultural Uruguay-Estados Unidos De America, Paraguay 1217 Montevideo 11100, Uruguay

Youth for Understanding, Juncal 1327, Apto. # 504, Montevideo 11000, Uruguay

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Morrison, Marion Let's Visit Uruguay
Dobler, Lavinia Land and People of Uruguay
Alisky, Marvin Uruguay

GAUCHOS are similar to the American cowboy. Use your diagram of the cowboy to match the number on the illustration with each of these vocabulary words.

sombrero_____
horn_____
cartridge belt_____
six shooter_____
tapaderas_____
spurs/rowels_____
stirrups_____
holster_____
cinch_____
boots_____
flank cinch_____
saddle_____
handkerchief_____
rope_____

Use your article about Gauchos to find words from the story which are similar to the articles used by cowboys.

COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY USING THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES

LOCATION

absolute_____
relative _____

PLACE_____
_____
_____

MOVEMENT_____
_____
_____

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

REGION _____
_____
_____

_____

_____

COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY USING THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES
CITY: MONTEVIDEO
LOCATION
absolute: lat:34.50S long: 56.10W
relative: borders Brazil, Argentina, mouth of Rio de la Plata
PLACE: port city, old, tourist center, gauchos, estancias, sheep
MOVEMENT: Spanish colony, port, air transportation, immigration, emigration
ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION: water quality, drinking water, hydroelectric power, air pollution, animal preserves, wetlands
REGION: all of the above

COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY/ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
Many regions have geography/environmental concerns.
1. Identify one concern of the region.
2. Describe the solution the citizens of this region have decided upon.
3. Tell why you agree or disagree with this decision.
4. Tell about a decision of your own that you think would solve the concern.

Some choices might be: water pollution, energy, over fishing, economy & industry, waste disposal, tourism, and wildlife management.

COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY/ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS
REGION: _____
CONCERN: _____
THEIR DECISION: _____
_____
_____
YOUR REACTION: _____
_____
_____
YOUR SOLUTION: _____

_____

_____

DRAW A PICTURE OF HOW YOU WOULD ILLUSTRATE YOUR SOLUTION TO THE CITIZENS> USE LABELS, IF NECESSARY.